

Americans, we shall all have a say in the decisions that affect our lives.

But as you know, this Nation has not always lived up to that promise. Indeed, the story of American democracy is a story of ordinary Americans daring to make extraordinary sacrifices in order for the promise to become a reality for all Americans, regardless of their race, gender, age, sexual orientation, or class.

Madam Speaker, today is a day of great significance and great consequence. We, in the House, passed the John Robert Lewis Voting Rights Act, as well as the Freedom to Vote Act. Now, today, the Senate will take up and debate both bills and vote on the future of our democracy.

What is at stake is clear. The current state of voting rights is very clear. Old battles have become new again, as State legislatures across this Nation have erected deliberate barriers to the ballot box in an all-out assault on the right to vote.

Though we no longer have a poll tax, nor do we have to count how many jelly beans are in a jar, we do know that the modern-day restrictions are no less pernicious: Long lines, closed polling stations, purged voter rolls, bans on early voting, and the list goes on and on. In Georgia it is now a crime to hand out food and water to a voter in line. And so I ask you, What are we afraid of?

Madam Speaker, the significance of this moment is not lost on me for, you see, representing Alabama's 7th Congressional District, voting rights are very personal. People in my district fought, marched, prayed, and, yes, some died for the equal right of all Americans to vote.

I know that this body reveres our late, great Congressman John Lewis. It was John who said that the struggle for voting rights is not a struggle for one day or one year, it is a struggle for a lifetime.

So we have to fight—every generation does—to protect the progress of the past and to advance it. And that is exactly what the John Robert Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act does.

I ask our Senators; how will they be remembered? Years from now, when our children and grandchildren look back on this moment and ask, What did you do to fight for voting rights? How will you be remembered?

Now, we are not asking our Senators to march. We are not asking them to sacrifice. We are not asking them to bleed on a bridge.

We are asking them to do their jobs. To do their jobs.

We are asking them to have the courage of their convictions, to use their position of great power to save our democracy in this critical moment.

Madam Speaker, to my colleagues, voting rights advocates, and stakeholders, I say, no matter what the outcome is today, we cannot be deterred. John Lewis and those brave foot soldiers did not give up. Think of where

our country would be if John and Hosea Williams and those that were bludgeoned on that bridge hadn't picked themselves up 2 days later and marched again.

Voting rights is a struggle of a lifetime, and we have to be in that fight. We cannot be tired. We can be frustrated. We can be downright mad. But we cannot give up. We have so many more miles to go before we declare victory. And victory we must have because our democracy depends on it.

Our colleague, JIM CLYBURN, this past weekend invoked the Bible. He said, it is darkest before the dawn. Indeed, by not taking this moment to protect the right to vote, we are allowing extremists to strip away the power of the people.

We all celebrated Dr. Martin Luther King's birthday on Monday. Dr. King said that "... the arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends towards justice." But it only bends if we Americans decide to challenge it, decide to make sure that this Constitution lives up to its ideals. It is time for the Senate to do their part.

In remembrance of the sacrifices of others, the Senate must reform its rules. We all have a role to play. And I say to the activists and to the Senators, the time to act is always now.

King said it is always time to do what is right. We must get into some good trouble. We must keep our eyes on the prize, and the prize is our democracy and restoring the right to vote.

FEDERAL TAKEOVER OF ELECTIONS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. FOXX) for 5 minutes.

Ms. FOXX. Madam Speaker, Washington Democrats have become desperate to shield their slim majorities in the House and Senate; so desperate, in fact, that they are willing to silence millions of Americans by orchestrating a Federal takeover of elections.

Look no further than H.R. 1 and H.R. 4. These pieces of legislation are the ones Americans should be concerned about.

□ 1030

Madam Speaker, all Washington Democrats have done is operate off their own manufactured hysteria.

Thanks to ranking member RODNEY DAVIS of the Committee on House Administration, we have the facts on why the Democrats' narrative is wrong.

2020 saw the highest voter turnout in 120 years, and according to Pew, 94 percent said it is easy to vote. There is clearly no widespread "voter suppression" issue in this country.

Georgia's new "voter suppression law" has more days of early in-person voting than New York.

Texas' "voter suppression law" ends pandemic exceptions like universal

drive-thru voting and 24-hour voting. Neither existed in Texas before 2020. Neither widely exists even in blue States.

When it comes to abolishing the filibuster, there are even more facts.

The filibuster prevents Federal laws swinging wildly with every election.

If the filibuster is taken away, millions of citizens and entire States would be silenced.

Senator SCHUMER's push is not a response to the 2020 election or new State laws.

As early as 2019 and August 2020, Senator SCHUMER was already discussing abolishing the filibuster, but only if he won control.

If the filibuster is wiped clean off the map, imagine what will be done next: Packing the Supreme Court; ramming through the Green New Deal; defunding the police, and every other misguided item that Washington Democrats have in their political playbook.

The consequences would be disastrous for America.

Madam Speaker, Americans do not want the one-party rule agenda of Washington Democrats, the anniversary of which is tomorrow.

They do not want to see their own country become even more bankrupted by the failed policies under this administration and razor-thin majority.

Republicans will continue to stand firm against this far-left agenda, and we will not sit on the sidelines.

It is vital that Americans know what these election bills will do and the consequences that will affect this great country if they are passed.

Thank you again to Ranking Member RODNEY DAVIS and his staff for their continued hard work and diligence on this issue.

CONGRESS IS SERVING OUR VETERANS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Nevada (Mrs. LEE) for 5 minutes.

Mrs. LEE of Nevada. Madam Speaker, I rise today to speak about news that many people don't hear too much about coming out of Washington.

Too often they only hear one side of the story about divisiveness, gridlock, and a general unwillingness to put results over politics.

And don't get me wrong, it is a problem, but there are a whole lot of us in this body that are fighting every day to put an end to that and break the cycle in Washington, especially when it comes to our veterans.

In the past 2 months alone we have seen legislative breakthroughs that had the support of both Democrats and Republicans to help make sure that our country continues to serve our Nation's veterans.

I introduced bipartisan, bicameral legislation with Representatives ANTHONY GONZALEZ, TONY GONZALES, and COLIN ALLRED to invest in the Zero Suicide initiative and bring accountability into the VA.